TWO DISTINCT PHASES OF THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

A Comparison Between the Rapture (Pre-tribulational Coming) and the Second Advent (Post-tribulational Coming)

1. TIME

A. **RAPTURE**--before the tribulation (Revelation 3:10). The church will be kept out of that hour or time of testing which will come upon the whole world. See our booklet, *Will the Church Go Through the Tribulation?* (50¢).
B. **SECOND ADVENT**--after the tribulation (Matthew 24:29-30; Revelation 19:11-16).

2. QUICKNESS

A. **RAPTURE**--in a "moment" (Greek-"atom," a split-second, literally "uncut, indivisible," we divide and cut time into years and months and days and hours and minutes and seconds, but the smallest measure of time is an "atom" of time which we might call a split-second), in the blinking on an eye (1 Cor. 15:52). It is very sudden. It will happen before people will realize it is happening (even as it was with Enoch, see Genesis 5:24; Hebrews 11:5). An example of a man being raptured away suddenly so as to be seen no more is found in Acts 8:39 (where the Greek word for rapture, harpazo, is used).
B. **SECOND ADVENT**--slow enough for people to realize and see what is happening (Matthew 24:27; Rev. 1:7; Psalm 2:2; Rev. 19:19). The second coming of Christ to the earth will be visible and obvious to all. No one will miss it.

3. DATE (THE DAY ON WHICH IT WILL TAKE PLACE)

A. **RAPTURE**--UNKNOWN DAY. The Lord Jesus will surely come for His Church (John 14:3) but we do not know when (compare 1 John 2:28 and 3:2 where the subjunctive mood is used indicating that while the fact of His coming is sure, the time of His coming is unsure). The rapture is imminent which means that

He may come at any time. See Allen Beechick's discussion of the UNKNOWN DAY in the book The Pretribulation Rapture).

B. **SECOND ADVENT**--KNOWN DAY. The date of the second coming can be calculated to the very day. It will occur 2520 days (7 years, or 84 months, each month made up of 30 days) from the time that Antichrist makes a treaty with Israel (Daniel 9:27) and it will occur 1260 days (3½ years) from the time of the abomination of desolation (Matt. 24:15). See Revelation 11:2,3; 12:6,14; 13:5; 2 Thess. 2:8 (Antichrist destroyed at 2nd coming). Of course, this "known day" cannot be known or calculated by anyone until the treaty is signed (Dan. 9:27).

4. PRECEDING SIGNS

A. **RAPTURE**--NONE (Tit. 2:13; Rev. 22:20; etc.). He may come for His Church at any time and nothing needs to be fulfilled before He comes. The only thing we are waiting for is the completion of the church (Matt. 16:18; Rom. 11:25), and only God knows when this will be.

B. **SECOND ADVENT**--MANY (Matthew 24:3-28). There is much that must be fulfilled before Christ returns to the earth (such as all the events in Revelation 6-18).

ILLUSTRATION: The rapture can be likened to Thanksgiving (a holiday without signs) and the second advent can be likened to Christmas (which is preceded by all kinds of signs). When you see the signs of Christmas (decorations, lights, trees, etc.) then you can be sure that Thanksgiving will take place at any time. If Christmas is near then Thanksgiving must be even nearer!

5. VISIBILITY

A. **RAPTURE**--Christ seen only by the church (1 Thess. 4:17; 1 John 3:2).

B. **SECOND ADVENT**--Christ seen by every eye (Rev. 1:7; Matthew 24:24-27).

6. LOCATION

A. **RAPTURE**--in the air (1 Thess. 4:17).

B. **SECOND ADVENT**--on the earth (Zech. 14:4; Acts 1:11).

7. ASSOCIATED JUDGEMENT

A. **RAPTURE**--the judgment seat of Christ (2 Tim. 4:1,8; 1 Pet. 1:7).

B. **SECOND ADVENT**--destruction of the wicked armies (Rev. 19:17-19) and the

judgment of living nations (Matthew 25:31-46).

8. IDENTITY OF THOSE REMOVED FROM THE EARTH AND THOSE REMAINING ON THE EARTH

A. **RAPTURE**--Believers are removed; unbelievers remain (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-53; John 14:3).
B. **SECOND ADVENT**--Unbelievers are removed; believers remain (Matthew 24:37-41 and Luke 17:34-37). See Matthew 24:38 where the unbelieving world in Noah's day was taken away in judgment.

9. PURPOSE OF CHRIST'S COMING

A. **RAPTURE**--to receive His bride (John 14:3; 1 Thess. 4:17).
B. **SECOND ADVENT**--to receive His kingdom (Luke 19:22; Rev. chapters 19-20)

10. THE BODIES OF LIVING BELIEVERS

A. **RAPTURE**--church age believers are raised (those who have died) and are translated and "changed" (those who are living) with the result that they have immortal, resurrection bodies (1 Cor. 15:52-53; 1 Thess. 4:17).
B. **SECOND ADVENT**--believers who survive the tribulation enter the kingdom in natural bodies (Matthew 25:23), and these believers will eventually bear children and re-populate the earth.

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